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Sens. Cassis and Toy introduce senior-friendly tax measures

LANSING – State Sens. Nancy Cassis and Laura Toy on Thursday introduced two measures to help seniors with their taxes.

Senate Bill 348, sponsored by Cassis, R-Novi, raises the income threshold for people who qualify to defer the due date of their summer taxes until Feb. 15. Currently at \$25,000, the bill increases the allowable gross household income to \$45,000.

An eligible person must also meet one of the following criteria: they are 62 years of age or older; paraplegic or quadriplegic; an eligible serviceperson; veteran; widow or widower; blind; or someone who is totally and permanently disabled.

“With the governor having accelerated the collection of county taxes to the summer, many people have disproportionately high tax bills compared to the past,” said Cassis, chair of the Senate Finance Committee. “This has put a terrible amount of financial pressure on many residents, particularly seniors, who will be helped this legislation.”

Senate Bill 347, introduced by Toy, R-Livonia, requires the state Department of Treasury to notify a taxpayer whose return is selected for manual review within 10 days. Treasury also is required to include an approximate time frame for the review and contact information for someone at the department who can assist the taxpayer with any questions.

“Many seniors count on their tax return to pay summer property taxes,” Cassis said. “The state should be processing tax returns as quickly as possible, and if there is need for review, a timeline ought to be provided to the taxpayer.”

Treasury tends to pull returns that have been handwritten for review. With the large increase in electronically filed returns, that means seniors who file manually are oftentimes signaled out for review, and left waiting for months without any notice from the department, according to Cassis.

The legislation was referred to the Senate Finance Committee.

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